

# On The Rock

Teaching given by Peter Warren at FGPC, July - August 2015

## 1. On This Rock

**Matthew 16.13-20**

### ***Who Do You Say That I Am?***

This is a personal question which demands a personal response.

Who do men say that I am?

Jesus made an impression wherever He went. His fame went before Him. Every where He went people heard that great miracles were taking place:

- Blind Bartimaeus in Jericho (Mark 10.46-52)
- Zaccheaus in Jericho (Luke 19.2-6)

Jesus was not moved or impressed by public opinion.

Who do you say that I am?

This was a pivotal moment in Peter's life – he had to confess Jesus as the Christ. He was an impetuous and impulsive man and often spoke 'out of turn', but here he speaks with all the conviction he has.

- it does not matter what others say about Jesus – your salvation, your walk with God is personal – **it's up to you!**

Philippians 2.12 - “**work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**” - you can't blame others, your parents, children, friends or pastor

### ***On This Rock***

Matthew 16.17

Blessed are you - Peter didn't get this revelation from man but from the Father.

We must always believe that the word we hear and receive is direct from the Father

2 Timothy 3.16-17

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God – it comes direct from the Father.

The Bible was penned by approximately 40 different people over a period of about 1500 years – but there is only one author - the Father, the Holy Spirit, Jesus the Word

Since God has authored the Bible then it must be true. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction/training to live righteously.

We can build our whole life and character on the foundation of the Word of God.

Matthew 16.18

**'On this rock'** –

- this rock was not a person (Peter)
- place (mountain),
- set of rules or guidelines.

The clue to what Jesus meant can be found in verse 17 – 'revealed'. The revelation of the word of God - Jesus is the Rock, the Living Word. The Father reveals to Peter who Jesus is.

Jesus will build His church on the foundation of the Word of God.

- It was founded on the Word of God.

Romans 10.17 - Our faith comes from hearing the Word of God

Psalms 119.89 - God's Word is forever settled in Heaven

Isaiah 55.11 - God's Word always accomplishes its purpose.

Joshua 1.8 - God's word will make you successful if you meditate in and follow after it.

Hebrews 4.12 - God's word is alive and active – there is *energes* [Gk.] (power and energy) in the Word of God. Genesis 1 the word was active and powerful at creation.

Jesus is building His church on this rock of revelation.

Hell cannot prevail against the rock – the foundation on which the church is built and established, the Word of God.

The Word is one of our great weapons that is used against the enemy – He cannot overpower and overcome the Word.

## **2. It's Up To You – Work Out Your Own Salvation**

### **Matthew 16.13-19**

This was a pivotal moment in Peter's life – He was an impetuous and impulsive man and often spoke 'out of turn', but here he speaks with all the conviction he has, he confesses Jesus as the Christ.

Who do you say that I am? A personal question from the Lord to us – a key question. What think ye of the Christ? (Matthew 22.42) - another key question from the Lord.

Everybody has their opinion as to He is. But who do you say that I am?

He is the Christ, we confess this with conviction, what the Father has revealed to us.

This is a personal question to us and demands a personal response from us. We cannot get to heaven on the back of somebody else's salvation experience.

Who do men say I am? - it does not matter what others say – your salvation, your walk with God is personal – it's up to you!

Philippians 2.12 - “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” - you can't blame others, your parents, children, friends or pastor.

Do not judge Christianity on the example of Christians but rather the example of Jesus Christ.

We must make sure our own life is right with God.

### ***What Does It Mean To Work Out Your Own Salvation***

1. Saved by Grace, not of yourselves, not of works – Ephesians 2.8-9
  - we cannot earn salvation
  - we receive it as a gift from God
2. Your decision to follow Jesus is personal – John 21.19-21
  - It has nothing to do with works, status or family
  - Peter was more concerned with what would happen to John but Jesus told him that his walk was personal – take care of your own walk
3. Build yourself up – Jude 1.20
  - as in the natural so in the things of God
  - babies are dependent on their mothers for food – but they grow and develop to the point where they feed themselves, then later they support themselves. We need to grow and we do that with the Word of God (1 Peter 2.2) - meditating and studying.

### ***Follow God's Word - (Matthew 16.17-19)***

'On this rock.. [gates of Hades cannot prevail against it](#)' – the rock is impenetrable, the rock is the word of God and the gates of hell cannot prevail against the Word. Jesus defeated satan with the Word (Matthew 4/Luke 4)

Matthew 7.24 “[whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them.. wise man who built on ROCK”](#)

Jesus will build HIS church on what God has revealed – God's Word; for us living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is the written word.

2 Kings 19.30 / Isaiah 37.31 if the foundation is good then the building will be good.  
Those who have good roots will bear fruit.

Psalm 1.1 We do not follow the world's ways, systems or counsel but we follow what the Word of God says.

Who do men say? - it's not about what men (professionals, politicians, even pastors) say..  
What does God say?

We have to come to the point that God's is true. Romans 3.4 "...let God be true and every man a liar"  
Follow God, Follow His Word – this Royal Law, these lively Oracles of God

"At the coronation ceremony of Queen Elizabeth II sixty years ago (1953), the Queen placed her hand on a Bible as she knelt and promised before God to perform her solemn oath. The ceremony continued as these words were spoken to her:  
"Our gracious Queen: To keep your Majesty ever mindful of the Law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian princes, we present you with this book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is wisdom; this is the Royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God" " (from 'Arise' by Kingsley N Armstrong, ch.6, pg.92 published by Barratt Ministries, Manchester)

### **3. A Good Foundation On Which To Build**

#### **Matthew 16.13-20**

#### ***Who Do You Say That I Am?***

Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. " (vs 18)

- The rock is the revelation of the word of God.

#### 2 Timothy 3.16

Every Scripture is given (revealed, inspired) by God for doctrine, reproof, correction and training. It is all we need to be fully equipped for every good work.

**Matthew 7.24** "[whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them.. wise man who built on ROCK"](#)

Jesus identifies the wise man as one who not only hears what He says but puts it into practice.

James 1.22 - Be doers of the word not hearers only.

We can build our lives on the rock, it must be founded on the word of God.

Romans 1.17 says that faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God.

Has God told you to do something? Are you believing God for something? then, what Scripture are you standing on?

Matthew 7.26

Those who do not practice or do what God says are like a foolish man who builds on sand, without a solid foundation, the floods and rains will wash it away and the building will crumble and fall. Is your life falling apart, can you see it crumbling and falling? Check your foundation, are you hearing and putting the word into practice?

## How Can We Build Our Lives On The Rock?

### 1. God's Word is True

- John 17.17 – “sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth”
- Psalm 119.160 - “the entirety of Your word is truth”

### 2. God's Word is Stable

God's word is rock but it is not rocky – it is stable

- Mark 13.31 - “heaven and earth will pass away but My words will by no means pass away”
- Psalm 119.89 - “Forever O Lord Your word is settled in heaven” - ***I don't believe it, that doesn't change it!*** God's word does not change, so it doesn't matter whether we believe it or not. Our not believing it will not change it.

Isaiah 55.8-11 God's word always comes to pass – it prospers and accomplishes it's purpose.

### 3. God's Word Guides Us

- Psalm 119.105 - “Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path”
- Psalm 119.130, Psalm 119.133
- Romans 10.17 - “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God”

God's word establishes and grounds our faith – gives us something solid to believe in

## 4. The Prophetic Word Confirmed

**Matthew 16.13-20**

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ” (vs 18)

**Faith Needs Action** - those who hear the Word of God and put it into practice build on the rock (Matthew 7.24)

James 1.22

Don't just be a hearer of the word but also someone who does it. Faith comes by hearing but it also requires action on our part.

### **Mark 9.2-10**

- Peter, James and John were with Jesus on the mountain
- Jesus was transfigured before them – His clothes were white, bright and shining
- Two of the Old Testament greats appeared talking with Jesus – Moses and Elijah. These three representatives of the Word of God: Moses (the Law), Elijah (the Prophets), Jesus (the New Testament)
- The glory of God descended in the cloud
- They heard the voice of God speak “This is My beloved Son....”

They were eyewitnesses to the events that took place - they had seen the prophets and the cloud, they had heard the voice of God speaking.

### **2 Peter 1.12-21**

Peter begins to outline the legacy that he wished to leave after his death.

- He did not preach stories or cunningly devised fables
- He preached, spoke and wrote about what he had seen – He was an eyewitness. An eyewitness account is very difficult to disprove.
- Peter refers to the voice of God that he heard on the mountain – we heard it, we were there.

Many people in the church have words, they receive prophecies, they hear 'God speaking' – but Peter could honestly say he heard the voice of God. He went to encourage the church by telling them that they have the prophetic word confirmed – the Holy Scriptures.

Peter's legacy – listen to the Word of God.

- We do not trust in visions, prophecies, or gifts of the Holy Spirit
- These gifts and utterances will always be backed up with the Scriptures – this is the prophetic word confirmed, or made more sure.
- The gifts are to be taken as confirmation of what we already know and believe from the word of God
- We must esteem God's Word above all – the rock.

## **5. A Word-Led Lifetsyle**

### **Matthew 16.13-20**

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” (vs 18)

We have seen how Jesus likened the man or woman who hears what He says and does it as a wise person who builds on rock.

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- They were eyewitnesses to the events that took place - they had seen the prophets and the cloud, they had heard the voice of God speaking.

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- Peter refers to the voice of God that he heard on the mountain – we heard it, we were there.

### ***Allowing The Word of God to Lead You.***

On the mountain top Peter heard the voice, he saw the visitation of Moses & Elijah and he recalls this incident in his letter but then goes to say “..but we have a more sure word of prophecy”

Many people in the church have words, they receive prophecies, they hear 'God speaking' – but Peter could honestly say he heard the voice of God.

Peter's legacy – He went to encourage the church by telling them that they have the prophetic word confirmed – the Holy Scriptures.

- We do not trust in visions, prophecies, or gifts of the Holy Spirit
- These gifts and utterances will always be backed up with the Scriptures – this is the prophetic word confirmed, or made more sure.
- The gifts are to be taken as confirmation of what we already know and believe from the word of God
- We must esteem God's Word above all – the rock.

Seeking God's direction is not about waiting to hear a voice, or a visitation of angels, longing for visions or dreams, it's about the more sure word of prophecy. God leads us and directs us by His Word.

In his first letter Peter writes that we should “[desire the pure milk of the word so that we can grow](#)” (**1 Peter 2.2**).

- Desiring the word is not just for babies. It is essential for babies, it causes growth, it establishes them and grounds them in the faith and their walk with God.
- As we grow up we're not meant to swap the milk for a 'fizzy-pop' diet, we must maintain our intake of the word.
- We develop to solid food and strong meat and we still get that from the Word of God

God's word will not only feed us so we become spiritually strong but it will lead us and direct us in all our ways

“[lean not to your own understanding.. in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths](#)” (**Proverbs 3.5-6**).

- The context of these verses is to do with receiving and keeping the Word.
- We are not to lean to our own understanding – feelings, dreams, visions – these can all be influenced by our surroundings, circumstances and even demonic forces that seek to destroy us. If we honour, treasure and keep the Word it will direct our paths.

“[Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path](#)” (**Psalm 119.105**)

- Here the psalmist tells us plainly - God's Word is a light that illumines the way and shows us which steps to take.

In **2 Timothy 3.14-17** the apostle Paul wrote some instruction to a young man who was a trainee minister of his

- He tells him to “[continue in the things which you have learned..](#)”
- He had been brought up on the Word and must continue in it – it would lead him, guide him, instruct him, train him for life and service.

A vision, a dream, feeling or any other 'prophetic word' will clarify what you already know and believe to be true from the Word – and if they are from God they will be confirmed by Scripture.

If you have a dream, vision or prophecy that does not make sense to you, ie it does not clarify a situation, then seek God and ask Him to reveal the interpretation to you. Spend time in His Word and allow God to speak to you.

## **6. Walking On The Word**

### **Matthew 16.18**

“[And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.](#)”

Over the last few weeks we have been taking our theme Scripture, Matthew 6.18, and drawing several lessons from it.

1. The Rock is the revealed word of God – we have it in written form
2. Our salvation and walk with God is personal – we need a personal relationship with Jesus and we need to work at it through study, prayer and fellowship.
3. The Word of God is a solid foundation on which we can build our lives
4. The written word of God is more sure and stable than any other revealed word, either through preaching, the gifts of the Spirit or visions and dreams.
5. We need to have a Word led lifestyle – that is we allow the Word of God to be our guide in all the affairs of life.

As we continue to develop this theme of having a word led lifestyle we are going to answer the question: How do we allow the Word to lead us?

To answer this question we are going to look at another occasion in the life of Peter where he gave the Word a prominent place in his life.

### Luke 5. 1-11

1. One of the first key points in allowing ourselves to be led by the Word of God is to be **serious** about it. We see in verse 1 that the people were pressing in to hear the word of God. This means they were crowding Him and pushing forward even to the point where He could have been crushed, so He climbed into one of the boats and taught them from a safe distance (v2-3). There was a sense of urgency and seriousness about hearing the Word. The people were hungry to hear all that they could – His teaching was different to the priests, He taught with power and authority.
  - i. The picture we have here is like that of a crowd of people around a bargain stall in a market or sale – if you want the good deals you need to get to the front and snap them up before someone else does.
  - ii. Being serious about the Word of God means spending time in it – we need to be constantly in the Word, reading, studying and meditating. Not just dipping into it every once in a while or only when we find ourselves in trouble. The faith we need to overcome situations and sicknesses cannot be developed over night, so we can't afford to wait until trouble strikes before we dig into the Word of God. Don't wait for trouble to come get serious about the Word now.
2. Being serious about the Word of God also means that we **believe** the things we read regardless of what we think or feel. We have to accept that it is God speaking to us. 2 Timothy 3.16 says “**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...**” other translations tell us it “**God-breathed (given by His inspiration)**” (Amp).
  - i. All Scripture – that means what it says, ALL.
  - ii. God breathed or inspired – it has been spoken by God Himself. It is God speaking direct to you and me. They were written by the Spirit of God for our teaching, training and instruction. They are also useful for correcting us and rebuking us if we go astray.
  - iii. Does God lie? Does He exaggerate the truth? Does He speak just for the sake of saying something? No, no and no. Every word that God has spoken is truthful and valid. **He means what He says and says what He means.**
  - iv. Our minds, emotions, feelings and experiences can all deceive us; so regardless of what we think, feel or have previously experienced we accept and believe that what God says is the truth – that's being serious.

3. Our third point, which we will spend some time with, is not only hearing and believing the Word but being **obedient** to it.

i. First let's look at Peter -

- a) He had been hearing Jesus teach. He heard every word that was spoken. It was his boat that Jesus had 'hired'
- b) We learn from vs2 that Peter and the other fishermen were cleaning their nets. They had been out fishing during the night, a very stressful night for these experienced fishermen – they had worked hard, laboured and toiled yet caught absolutely nothing for all their trouble (v5)
- c) At the end of this 'wasted' night they had come back to shore, were cleaning the nets ready for the next evenings work, before heading off home to sleep. Jesus was using Peter's boat and he was probably waiting for Jesus to finish His message so he could get off home.
- d) When Jesus had finished speaking to the multitude He turned to Peter and told him to launch his boat out into the deep waters and let down his nets for a catch –
- e) Peter told Jesus all about the fruitless night they had just had – but listen to his words to Jesus:

“And Simon (Peter) answered, Master, we toiled all night [*exhaustingly*] and caught nothing [*in our nets*]. But on the ground of Your word, I will lower the nets [*again*].” (vs5, Amp)

- f) “On the ground of Your word” - what a great statement. I particularly prefer this translation because of the word *ground*. This is solid foundation, terra firma, this is rock. What Peter effectively states here is this: 'just because You say so I will do it' – that's obedience.

ii. There are many Scriptures which encourage us to be obedient to what God says, we have already read and studied some of them.

“So everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them [*obeying them*] will be like a sensible (prudent, practical, wise) man who built his house upon the rock.” Matthew 7.24 (Amp)

“But be doers of the Word [*obey the message*], and not merely listeners to it, betraying yourselves [*into deception by reasoning contrary to the Truth*].” James 1.22 (Amp)

iii. When we walk on the ground of the Word of God we will not slip or fail – it is a solid foundation.

- a) The Psalmist could say: “He drew me up out of a horrible pit [*a pit of tumult and of destruction*], out of the miry clay (froth and slime), and set my feet upon a rock, steadying my steps and establishing my goings.” Psalm 40.2 (Amp)  
With our feet on the rock our steps are steady (we won't slip) and our ways are established (the Hebrew word used here means to be firmly fixed, secure, enduring, steadfast and can also mean to be rightly directed).

iv. Obedience to the Word results in great blessing.

- a) Peter was obedient to Jesus and caught a great number of fish. Actually note the words of the Scripture – Jesus told him to let down the nets. Peter said he would let down the net – that net broke because of the weight of the fish.

1. Peter was partly obedient, he realised his disobedience and that's the reason he said “[Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord](#)” Luke 5.8
- b) God's Word always brings results – it does not fail  
Isaiah 55.11; Joshua 1.8
- v. Peter's obedience to the Word of Jesus enabled him to walk on the water (Matthew 14.28-29)
  - a) Someone once said that Peter wasn't walking on the water – He was actually walking on the Word – the rock!

So to answer the question 'How do we allow the Word to lead us?' we have to

- be serious about it
- believe it
- obey it

## **7. The Keys of the Kingdom**

### **Matthew 16.18-19**

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will **give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven**, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven”

Jesus promised Peter that He would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. What are these keys?

The only reason we have keys is to lock or unlock things such as doors. Now Jesus wasn't talking about physical keys but in a figurative sense. He would show His disciples some principles that would unlock the kingdom of heaven.

We also need to understand what Jesus meant by the kingdom of heaven – a kingdom is the domain of a king, his realm and place of authority. For Christians the kingdom of heaven is the realm of God's rule and authority – God rules and reigns by His word. I believe that Jesus was telling Peter that the keys of the kingdom were the principles of the word of God which would unlock the blessing of God.

We can only receive anything from God by faith – be it salvation, gifts of the Holy Spirit, guidance, wisdom, healing or material blessings. Faith comes from hearing the word of God. So there is a connection between receiving the things we need and the word of God.

Let's look at some of these keys. Some of these we have previously covered but it is good to re-cover some ground:

## 1. God's people were commanded to stay in the Word

- Moses gave instruction to the children of Israel concerning their attitude toward the Word of God. In **Deuteronomy 6.6-9** he told them to be diligent to speak God's words, to teach them to their children in every aspect of their daily life. They were to display them on the doors so that they continued to read them and live them.
- Joshua perpetuated the command of God by reminding the children of Israel to continue in God's word so that they would be successful and prosperous. They were not to turn from it but to observe it, i.e. be doers of it. **Joshua 1.7-8**
- Solomon gave his son strict instruction to continue in the words of God and to pay attention to them - **Proverbs 4.20-23**. The issues of life proceed from the heart, the godly man/woman needs God's word to guard their heart.  
"Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life." vs23 (Amp)
- Even Jesus told us to stay in His word so that all we need would be provided - **John 15.7**.  
"If you live in Me [*abide vitally united to Me*] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you." (Amp)
- We must continue in the the things we have learned from the Word of God. In **2 Timothy 3.14-17** the apostle Paul wrote some instruction to a young man who was a trainee minister of his
  - He tells him "*continue in the things which you have learned..*"
  - He had been brought up on the Word and must continue in it – it would lead him, guide him, instruct him, train him for life and service.

## 2. God's Word Is Eternal

- He will not change one word that He has spoken from His mouth (**Psalm 89.34**). Men can offer their thoughts, opinions, diagnoses; governments can legislate and pass laws but that doesn't alter God's Word. It is eternal, it has stood the test of time and will continue to stand.
- Jesus said that His Word would endure (**Matthew 24.35**) and Peter echoed that in his letter (**1 Peter 1.22-25**). God's Word endures, even when the heavens and the earth have passed away it lives, abides and lasts forever.
- God's Eternal word is forever settled in heaven (**Psalm 119.89**) that means regardless of whether we believe it or not, it is true, established and not one letter will fail of God's word (**Matthew 5.18**). The truth of the matter is that men change, feelings change, circumstances change but God's Word remains.

## 3. God's Word is Truth

- The entirety (all) of God's Word is truth. The Bible declares that all of the Word of God is true in it's entirety, from Genesis to Revelation (**Psalm 119.160**).
- In His prayer to the Father, Jesus declared that God's Word is truth. **John 17.17**
- God cannot lie, He cannot break His word, He has given us His promise and His oath (**Romans 3.1-4, Hebrews 6.18**)  
God cannot lie – men, feelings, circumstances can. The truth changes facts (telling it as it is, is stating facts).
- The Bible tells us that God has magnified His Word above His own name (**Psalm 138.2**). God has bound Himself to His covenant, ie His Word. He cannot work outside of His Word. This is one reason why some people don't see the results they might want – eg maybe asking God to do something that He has already said is done.

#### **4. God's Word Must Be Our Primary Source of Sustenance**

- Just like a baby needs to be fed so it can grow. We need to feed on the word of God so we can grow and mature.
  - *'pure milk of the word'* - **1 Peter 2.2**. Babies begin on milk which provides all that they need for those first few months then they develop and feed on solid foods. Peter here tells us that like newborns we need to desire and develop the taste for the pure word so that we grow up in our walk of faith. This leads us on to..
  - *'solid food'* - Those who continue in the word of God should move from the basic principles of the word onto more weightier things. We cannot sustain a healthy walk with God by continuing to feed on milk. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth and told them they ought to be on solid foods and not still being fed milk **1 Corinthians 3.2**  
The writer to the Hebrews says the same - **Hebrews 5.12-14**
- Man cannot live on bread alone (**Deuteronomy 8.3**) – He needs the Word that comes forth from the mouth of God.
  - The natural man cannot live on just bread, he needs a varied and balanced diet – how much more in the things of God.
  - Everything thing the natural man needs, there is also a counterpart for the born again spirit man
- **Psalm 119.103**. The psalmist came to find out for himself that God's Word is sweeter than honey.
  - I believe from the word of God that when you feed your flesh, the spirit man lacks and eventually dies within, but when you feed the spirit man, the flesh profits from it (**1 Timothy 4.7-8**)
- Job too treasured God's Word above His natural food. **Job 23.12**

#### **5. God's Word Must Take Priority In Our Lives**

To conclude, a reminder of some of the things we have already seen.

- God's Word is true and should be desired more than gold, more than life itself. ***Psalm 19.7-9***
- We must give the Word our full attention. ***Proverbs 4.20-23*** . It should be kept before our eyes and in our hearts - ***Deuteronomy 6.6, 11.18***
- We must be doers of the word and not hearers only. ***James 1.22***
- Putting God's Word into action will put our lives on a firm foundation – on the rock (***Matthew 7.24-27***)

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